Lorraine Kimsa
**Theatre for Young People**

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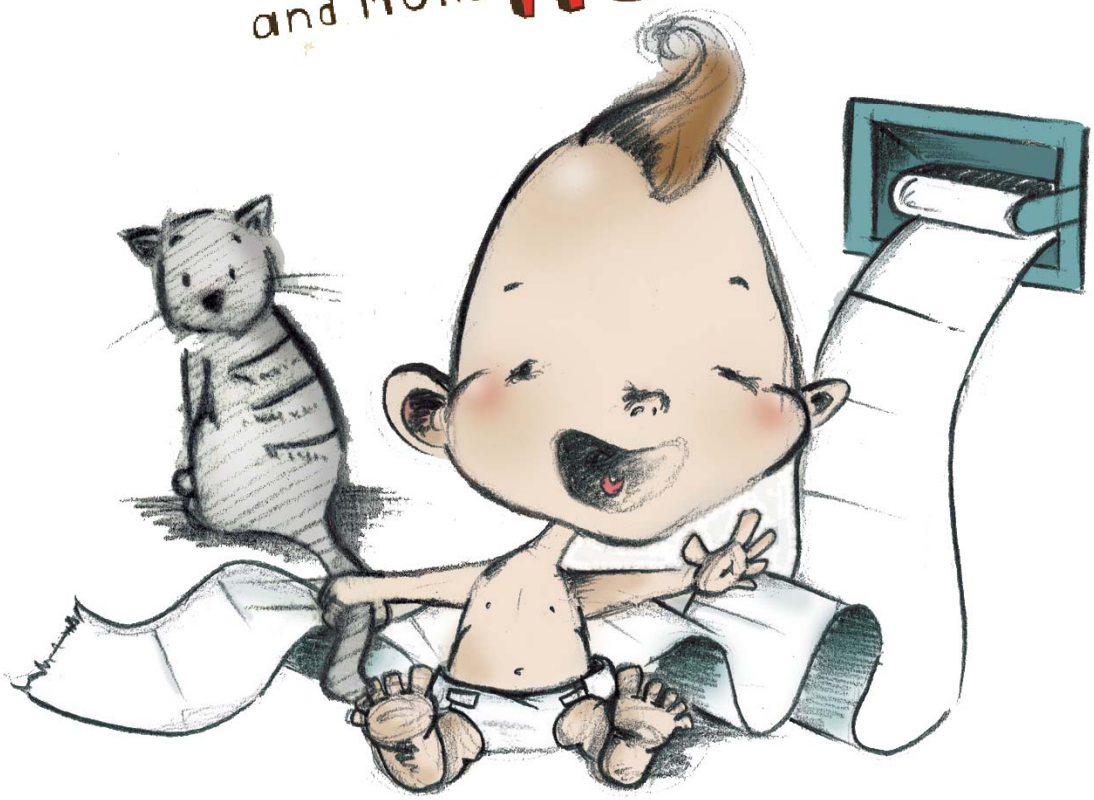
# LOVE YOU FOREVER... and MORE MUNSCH!



## Mainstage

Based on the stories of Robert Munsch

ADAPTED by Stephen Colella & Sue Miner | DIRECTED by Sue Miner

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# STUDY GUIDE

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **Allen MacInnis** | MANAGING DIRECTOR **Nancy J. Webster**

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## LIVE THEATRE IS AN ACTIVE EXPERIENCE

### GROUND RULES:

As members of the audience, you play an important part in the success of a theatrical performance. Please review the following theatre rules with your students prior to your LKTYP visit.

- Food, drinks, candy and gum are not permitted in the theatre.
- LKTYP is a nut-free zone. Many children have severe life-threatening allergies; NO PEANUTS or NUT products may be brought to our theatre.
- No electronic devices are permitted in the theatre because they affect our sound system. Photography, audio and video recording during a performance is prohibited by the Canadian Theatre Agreement.
- Students are not permitted to leave the theatre unless they are accompanied by an adult.

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### THEATRE IS A TWO-WAY EXCHANGE:

Actors are thrilled when the audience is engaged and responsive. We want you to laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy your time at the theatre. However, please be considerate audience members. Excessive talking, whispering and movement during a live performance can be distracting for the actors, and disruptive for other audience members.

Enhance your visit by encouraging your students to look at different aspects of the production. Before the show, identify tasks for your class. Have one group of students looking at the set, another listening for the music and sound effects, a third watching the lighting and a fourth, the costumes. Compare notes after the show about what they observed. Your students will be more informed and they'll be surprised by how much they noticed. Ask them to be prepared with one question for the actors after the show. Brainstorm with them about possible topics to get the most out of the experience!

# THE STUDY GUIDE

## Thematic Overview

In this study guide you will find discussion questions, student-in-role exercises, and visual art exercises that prompt early learners to explore storytelling and play. Jean Piaget (1896-1980); renowned theorist on early childhood development, shifted the thinking in the early part of the 20th century from the generally-held notion that children are "empty vessels ready to be filled with knowledge", to the idea that children are "scientists" (www.piaget.org) constantly building meaning for themselves and the world they inhabit through play and by trying new things; thus applying their own sense of logic and reason to any given situation. Early childhood educators and psychologists have since been building on this theory. Howard Gardner's concept of Multiple Intelligences (p. 9) for example, identifies further how children and adults make sense of the world by illuminating the different ways in which they are most apt to learn. As a result of the ongoing research and investigation by various pedagogical theorists and psychologists, many have concluded that play is an integral part of the cognitive, physical, and emotional development of a young child. Recent studies, such as Adele Diamond's work on pretense play (p. 11), have made exciting inroads in the study of early childhood development merging pre-existing theory with 21st century neuroscientific research.

At LKTYP we encourage playing for its learning properties, but also for its own sake. It is for these reasons that this study guide includes exercises for creating an ideal play environment as well as methods for assessing its beneficial effects on the mind and the body.

The activities in the guide follow a progression from an introductory level to a more advanced level and are therefore suitable for grades SK-3. The culminating activity involves creating stories using the provided stick figure illustrations inspired by the stories in *Love You Forever...and More Munsch*. Students will choose images from the categories: people, places, and actions in order to create original tales of their own. They will have the opportunity to represent these both visually (in art work) and dramatically.

LKTYP is proud be able to produce this show with American Sign Language (ASL) integrated into the production. When asked about why integrating ASL into *Love You Forever...and More Munsch*, Artistic Director Allen MacInnis responded:

> For some time, it has been my desire to incorporate ASL into a production rather than hiring an interpreter for only one or two performances. This is how our ASL production of *Love You Forever and More Munsch* came about.
>
> It excites me to think of how interesting the show will be to non-ASL speakers. The creation of new signs and context-specific signs is a feature of ASL and it is very likely that all of the audience – both hearing and non-hearing – will have the same opportunity to "learn" the new signs created for the show. As well, signing provides a great opportunity for hearing students to understand the value and beauty of additional forms of communication.
>
> For deaf and hard of hearing young people, I hope our production allows them to add to their ASL vocabulary as well as to feel that they are a visible and welcome part of the LKTYP family.

Check out our website www.lktyp.ca/en/learning/index.cfm for sketches of signed words from *Love You Forever...and More Munsch* and accompanying exercises!

LKTYP's production of *Love You Forever...and More Munsch* celebrates the humour and joy in Robert Munsch's stories. This production centred around *Love You Forever*, Munsch's beloved story about the bonds of family, continues to explore "Home" and "Family" LKTYP's season themes.

# THE STUDY GUIDE

## Curriculum Connections

THIS STUDY GUIDE will help you to prepare your students to see the play and integrate the performance into your curriculum.

In addition to DRAMA A and LANGUAGE ARTS L Love You Forever...and More Munsch directly relates to student development in the areas of:

KC Kindergarten Curriculum

S Storytelling
Generating Ideas

P Physical Education
Kinesthetic Awareness

A Visual Art

SS Social Studies
Roles & Responsibilities
Relationships

## Curriculum Expectations

By participating in the exercises in this study guide students will satisfy the following curriculum expectations as outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Education:

**JK/SK**
- communicate effectively by listening and speaking.
- demonstrate understanding of a variety of written materials that are read to them.
- communicate ideas (thoughts, feelings, experiences) for specific purposes (e.g., write a letter).
- express clear responses to written materials, relating the ideas in them (thoughts, feelings, experiences) to their own knowledge and experience.
- demonstrate a positive attitude towards themselves and others.
- identify and use social skills.

**Grade 1**
- produce two- and three-dimensional works of art that communicate ideas (thoughts, feelings, experiences) for specific purposes.
- demonstrate an understanding of some basic elements of drama (e.g., character).
- communicate understanding of works in drama and dance through discussion, movement, and visual art work.

**Grade 2**
- produce short pieces of writing using forms appropriate to their grade level.
- listen to discussions on familiar topics and ask relevant questions.
- talk about characters and situations in stories, and relate them to personal experience.
- interpret the meaning of stories, poems, and other material drawn from a variety of sources and cultures, using several basic drama techniques (e.g., tableaux, role-playing, writing in role).

**Grade 3**
- retell stories, demonstrating an understanding of basic story structure and including information about characters, action, and story ending.
- apply the rules for working with others.
- compare their own work with the work of others in drama and dance through discussion, writing, movement, and visual art work.

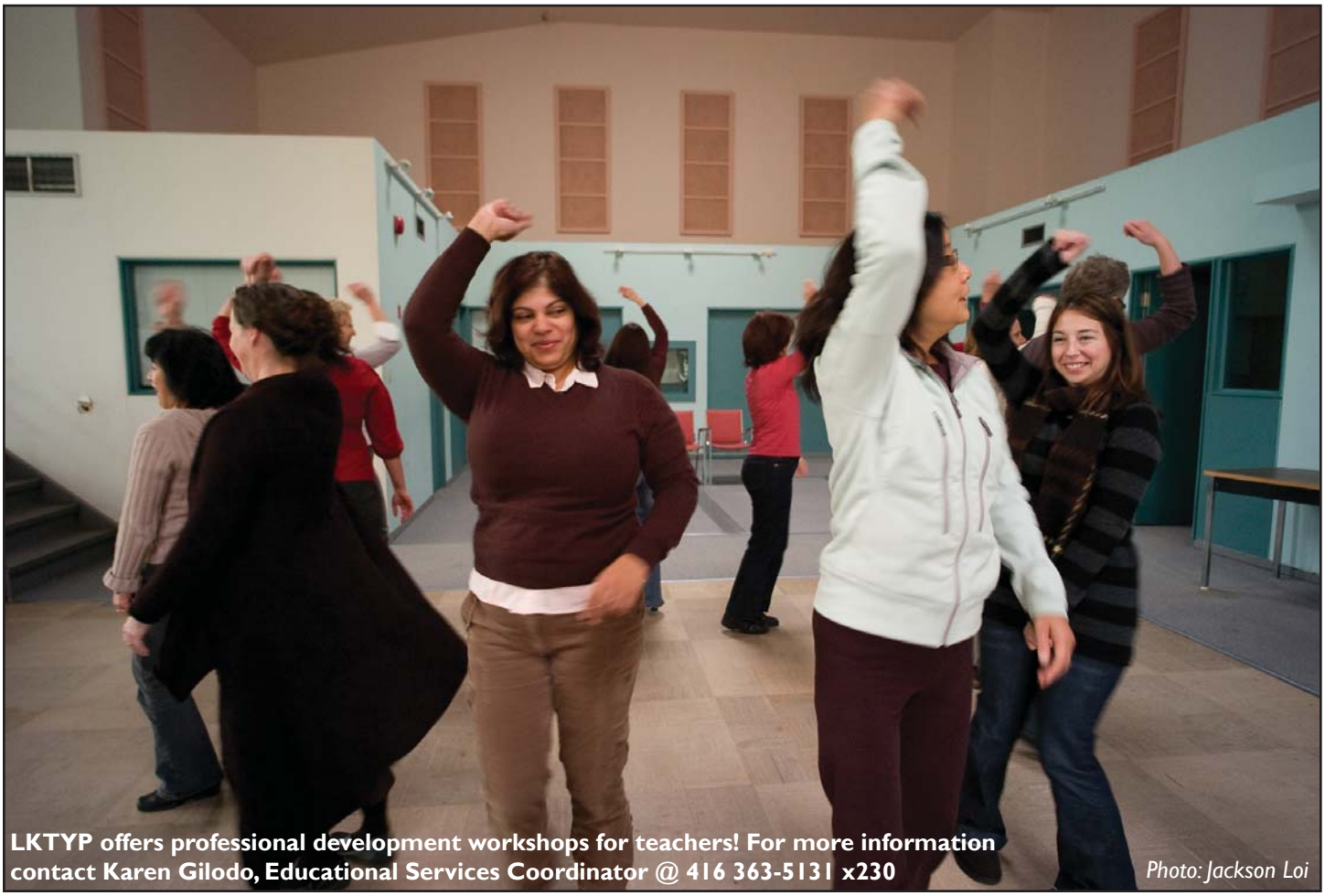
# THE COMPANY

## The Cast

| | |
|---|---|
| Scott Leaver | Mortimer/Ensemble |
| Adrienne Merrell | Sister/Ensemble |
| Jennifer Rayner | Mother/Ensemble |

## The Creative Team

| | |
|---|---|
| Sue Miner | Director/Adaptor |
| Stephen Colella | Adaptor |
| Robin Fisher | Set Designer |
| Mary Fulford-Winsor | Costume Designer |
| Kimberly Purtell | Lighting Designer |
| J.Rigzin Tute | Sound Designer |
| Kristen Kitcher | Stage Manager |
| Sandi Becker | Apprentice Stage Manager |
| Elizabeth Morris | ASL Consultant |



**LKTYP offers professional development workshops for teachers! For more information contact Karen Gilodo, Educational Services Coordinator @ 416 363-5131 x230**

*Photo: Jackson Loi*

# GLOSSARY

## Thematic Keywords and Terms

**Blocking:** integration of the players, set pieces, sound and light for the stage picture; clarity of movement for the communication; emphasizing character relationship; physicalizing stage life (Spolin 378).

**Calls or Side Coaching:** an assist given by the teacher-director as fellow player to the student-actor during the solving of a problem to help him/her keep focus...a message to the total organism; a support in helping players to explore the emerging plays (Spolin 392).

**Choral Speaking:** students interpret text (poems, stories, and other sources) by exploring the elements of choral (pitch, tone, rhythm) speaking and movement. Together, they experiment with language and explore their voices.

**Executive Function:** describes a set of cognitive abilities that control and regulate other abilities and behaviours. Executive functions are necessary for goal-directed behaviour. They include the ability to initiate and stop actions, to monitor and change behaviour as needed, and to plan future behaviour when faced with novel tasks and situations. Executive functions allow us to anticipate outcomes and adapt to changing situations. The ability to form concepts and think abstractly are often considered components of executive function (www.minddisorders.com).

**Pretense Play:** imaginative play that involves use of executive functions such as abstract thinking and cognitive flexibility.

**Tableau:** a suspension of movement into absolute stillness, like a snapshot. The tableau is created by players who freeze to form an image using different levels of the space they occupy with the intention of communicating to an audience.

# THE INTERPRETATION

## Director/Adaptor Note

There have been many adaptations of Robert Munsch stories for the stage. Maybe because of the extraordinary situations with characters who could be us, or because the language lends itself so well to being said aloud and hence theatrical. Or perhaps it is that they are just great stories and we need to share them collectively in a theatre. Since my daughter was 2 years old she requested "Robert Munsch" rather than any specific story, knowing that if he had written it, it would be an excellent story event.

Understanding this exceptional imagination and wide appeal to young people Allen MacInnis chose five Robert Munsch stories to be adapted for LKTYP. He gave the task of adapting them to the company dramaturg Stephen Colella and myself. We had free reign ensuring that it was adapted for 3 actors and was fully comprehensible to an audience who used American Sign Language as a first language. It was to be called *Love You Forever… and More Munsch*.

Initially we started with the stories themselves, wondering how they could fit together and flow. Some common threads included the notion of rescue as well as a highly-paced world that claimed as its victims adults and children alike, without anyone stopping to smell the roses or to tuck someone in properly.

Stephen came up with the idea that perhaps Mortimer could be the framework and his evening of singing, making music and getting quieted by his ever-increasingly aggravated family could be a place to start. We then set the entire play in his bedroom, playing with how the other stories could emerge from his imagination. He was not told a story. Rather his mother "threw him into bed" and said "MORTIMER. BE QUIET." He is then left alone to his own devices. A bedroom full of toys and the remnants of the day's energy must come to life in order to help him organize his thoughts before going to sleep.

The question then arose of how to insert Mortimer into the stories, without having him just be a witness. In *The Paperbag Princess* he is essentially cast as the dragon kidnapped by Prince Ronald. In *Murmel Murmel Murmel* he takes on more responsibility trying to help a baby find a family. In *Love You Forever* he witnesses that very baby grow up and see the world from the perspective of its new parent, and recognizes that even when a child can be challenging, the parent is ever-appreciative of that life and how it has affected them. In *Zoom* Mortimer is taken for a wild ride of speed and fun using characters from his own life to help a daughter and Mom come to grips with how taking risks increases independence and can benefit everyone. Like so many Robert Munsch stories the children are the voice of sanity while the grownups run around acting crazy as surely we must appear that way in our demanding noisy and busy lives.

The American Sign Language component has been a wonderful challenge to explore with this play. The stories depend on noise and rhythm: characters include "Thump Thump Thump" "murmel, murmel, murmel" and "ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM." We workshopped a way of storytelling that would ensure that a deaf and hard of hearing audience could fully understand the play without it simply being "translated" at the side by an interpreter. In workshops we explored telling the stories in various ways; in English, ASL, gibberish and gibberish ASL. We have been most fortunate working with Elizabeth Morris who is not only a talented theatre artist but also uses ASL as her first language. She continues to work with us on creating a unique way of communicating, combining ASL, voice, and gesture in the performing of this play. It sometimes becomes difficult to imagine how we communicate just using voice, as we listen with so much more than our ears.

*Love You Forever and More Munsch* has been a keen insight into the world from a young person's perspective via an amazing storyteller. It is a pleasure and an honour to be a part of it.

*-Sue Miner*

# THE INTERPRETATION

## Designer's Note

Designing the costumes for *Love You Forever...and More Munsch* was a difficult assignment. As a parent to three children, I have spent many hours reading and sharing Munsch stories. Upon hearing that I would be designing costumes for a play encompassing some of those stories my youngest daughters cautioned me "Mommy, you'd better get it right!" With this warning firmly lodged in my being, I began the design process.

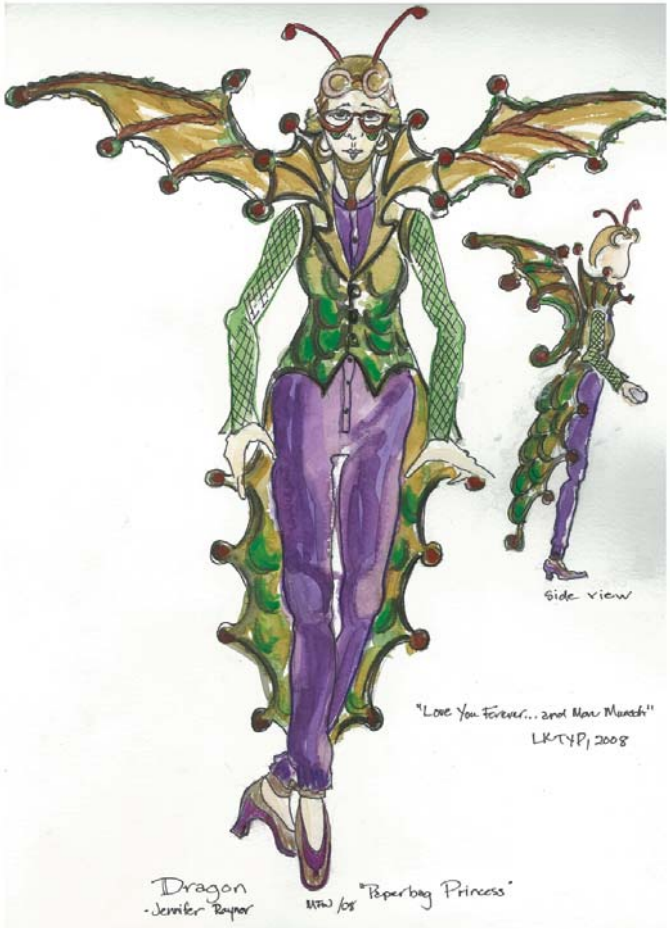
A designer must first inhabit the world of the story of the play, feel it and know it, before working her way out of that same world by drawing renderings. We decided that it was Mortimer's world and that the other stories and characters were products of Mortimer's fantasies and dreams come to life. The play is framed by Mortimer's mother trying to get him to go to bed and then tucking him in at the end, in when he finally drifts off to sleep. Mortimer is in his pyjamas and his imaginary friends (the other actors) that help enact the other stories are in their pj's as well. As for colour, we knew that Mortimer's home world was contained and about being quiet and going to sleep, so we chose greyed-down neutral colours without a peak of the colourful Munsch-inspired story world that happens in between. The stories are told in an abundance of colour which we tried to group somewhat for each story. *Paperbag Princess* needs a dragon with lots of green and red, a princess in pink and Mortimer drawing from the piles of clothing and toys in his room to create a splendid Prince Ronald. Mortimer's costumes are made up of what he can find around his room and the other characters are made from his imagination. *Murmel, Murmel, Murmel* takes place in the summer and is similar in colours to the "Paperbag" story that we just left. We also found "Murmel" to be one of the most difficult stories to tell. Principally, how have we ended up in a world where people are so busy and wrapped up in their own lives that they can't take a moment to assist a young child and a baby? Is our world that busy and commodity-based? The concept of the newspaper graphic came to be: newspaper is printed and replaced everyday, often wraps things up and is disposed of without a thought. We decided to link characters with an element of the newspaper graphic to both aesthetically link the story and also say something about the characters that we meet. Both "Murmel" and "Paperbag" also very much embrace the joy of a child playing dress-up, which is not the case in the next story. In *Love You Forever*, we see the story of a life-long love of a mother and her child and also at the end of our lives how our roles switch and we begin to parent our parents. This segment is deliberately a very close colour palette with the grown woman and the mother reflecting back the similarity of who they both are at the end. The basic union suit that is a young child's pyjamas (beginning of life) also conveys the comfortable covering of a mother who has grown to the end of her life and is now being mothered by her child. Finally, we decided that *Zoom!* needed to be like graphic fireworks as the last story in our play, prior to Mortimer drifting off to sleep. Lauretta's love of speed matches our love of colour, checks and stripes.

These costumes are meant to help tell the stories that are unfolding: enhancing the worlds that are being created. It is my hope that our aesthetic expands the stage picture and stimulates the imagination: building on the legacy of rich stories that is given to us by Robert Munsch.

*-Mary Fulford-Winsor*

# THE INTERPRETATION

## Designer's Sketches



# FOREWORD PEDAGOGICALLY SPEAKING

## Dramatic Play

Play, according to early childhood expert, Vivian Gussin Paley (2004) is "A Child's Work." Play experiences allow children to express their thoughts, develop their imaginations, and make sense of scattered experiences by relating their own observations and impressions to them. It is through child play, that children can grow and learn spontaneously. According to the hot-off-the press article in the Sunday New York Times, scientists who study play believe that it is a "central part of neurological growth and development – one important way that children build complex, skilled, responsive and socially adept and cognitively flexible brains" (Henig, 2008, p.40).

Play is vital to the development of young children since it provides them with a vehicle to investigate and explore and build on their existing knowledge as they create and clarify new understandings for themselves. We watch as they grow and learn spontaneously in their play time – talking, developing their imaginations, ordering, and making sense of their experiences through their own observations and impressions. Play can be viewed as an integral part of young children's experiences; we can find particular evidence in drama and language arts programs, but the evidence of play can emerge from a range of curriculum areas. Many children enjoy exploring a variety of tools and materials of their own choice to create drama in familiar and new ways. Problem-solving skills and their imaginations allow them to create drama pieces drawn both from story and life experiences.

When children are invited into the world of 'let's pretend' their learning opens up possibilities for problem solving, probabilities for working through ideas, and endless potential for making sense of the world. Play is a gift to feature what is significant to the growing and developing child: a chance to think, wonder, imagine, pretend, solve problems, inquire, interact, laugh, cry" (Cameron & Bezaire, 127). In the world of dramatic play children can be anyone, anywhere at any time. Should we not invite our children to unwrap the gift of play and let them delight in the wonder? Is it not the right of the child, to be able to play?

As teachers, we can facilitate the dramatic play environment, helping students expand their themes and extending and supplementing the language and the play with appropriate attitudes, approaches, and strategies.

- Provide a 'drama centre' which encourages dramatic play. Materials such as scarves, tools, toys, and boxes often stimulate undirected, spontaneous dramatic play.
- Provide time for play and observe the ways in which children make use of the materials provided.
- Intervene with questions about what is happening and/or suggest ways that props could be added to promote further play.
- Enter the play situation by taking on a role. Though years away from childhood years, the spirit of play is always ready to be awakened from within!

Larry Swartz is an instructor in the Elementary Pre-service Program at OISE/UT and the Principal of Dramatic Arts Additional Qualifications courses at OISE/UT. He is frequently called upon to share his expertise with children's literature, classroom talk, and anti-bullying strategies. To view Larry Swartz' full article, visit the Learning page at www.lktyp.ca.

# PEDAGOGICAL THEORY

## Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Creating an inclusive classroom involves making the learning space positive for children of different cultural and religious backgrounds and physical capabilities while accommodating the different ways in which students learn. Students do not necessarily fit into only one of the types of intelligences listed below; learning is fluid and teachers will likely find that intelligences overlap and intersect in each student. It is important then, for teachers to design lesson plans than incorporate methods of teaching for all of the types of intelligences present in the classroom.

**Linguistic intelligence** involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information. Writers, poets, lawyers and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence.

**Logical-mathematical intelligence** consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner's words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

**Musical intelligence** involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Howard Gardner musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

**Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence** entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the ability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Howard Gardner sees mental and physical activity as related.

**Spatial intelligence** involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and of more confined areas.

**Interpersonal intelligence** is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others. Educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders and counsellors all need a well-developed interpersonal intelligence.

**Intrapersonal intelligence** entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations. In Howard Gardner's view it involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and the ability to use such information to regulate our lives.

(www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm)

# UNITS OF STUDY

## Grades JK-3: Pre-Show

### Discussion Questions

- What is a story?
- What makes a story funny?
- What makes you laugh?
- What is playing?

### Activities

**Getting Ready to Play**

**Point of Concentration**: to create an environment where students are aware of themselves and engaged in critical thinking.

**Uses and Applications**: use *Getting Ready to Play* to set classroom guidelines and creating an ideal learning environment.

*In Improvisation for the Theater,* by Viola Spolin, Spolin refers to "The child's theater environment" as a place that should "stimulate, excite, and inspire" (280).
Spend some time with your class creating a set of guidelines that will govern how your class plays. The guidelines will create an environment intended to reinforce to students that playing is an important part of their learning.

**Directions**

**Begin by asking students**:

- What do they like about playing?
- When is playing the most fun?
- How do they feel when they play?
- Are following the rules important in playing a game? Why/Why not?
- How is it different playing on your own than playing with others?
- Why is playing important to you?
- What is the difference between play and work?
- What should teachers and grown ups know about playing?

Use the responses from students to create the playing guidelines for your class. For example, a six-year old was asked, "When is playing the most fun?" The response was, "playing is the most fun when you play with friends." This response indicates that young students recognize that having fun involves playing well with others. Asking students to think about questions such as these shows them that playing is valuable and will remind students to play well together.

# UNITS OF STUDY CONT'D

Grades JK-3 cont'd.

## Activities

### Assessing Play

**Point of Concentration:** to increase kinesthetic awareness.

**Uses and Applications**: assessing physical education and its effect on the body. This activity involves both the Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence and the Logical-mathematical intelligence.

Research shows that when children engage in play and pretense play especially, they are developing new cognitive abilities. A recent article entitled "Preschool Program Improves Cognitive Control" lead author Adele Diamond, Canada Research Chair in Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of British Columbia states:

> Though preschool teachers are under pressure to limit play and spend more time in instruction, mature social pretend play in preschool may be more critical for academic success than preschool academic instruction…the results of this study support the value of mature, intentional make-believe play…for the development of executive functions. Consider that during role-playing you have to hold in mind your role and the roles that others are play (working memory), you need to inhibit acting out of character (inhibitory control), and you need to flexibly adjust to whatever twists and turns the evolving plot might take (cognitive flexibility) (http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/media/releases/2007/mr-07-105/diamond_backgrounder.pdf).

Another positive effect of a stimulated imagination through pretense play is curiosity; an intrinsic kind of motivation that prompts children to investigate further out of their own free will. Increased intrinsic motivation will ultimately lead to a deeper interest in learning in general.
How is one affected by meaningful play? On the most basic level one tends to notice a change physically (heart rate increases), emotionally (attitude becomes more positive), cognitively (ideas are flowing, questions arise etc.). Before engaging in the storytelling activities, conduct a study on the effects of play as a class. Use the rubric on page X to assess new cognitive skills (working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility) acquired by students through play.

**Directions:**

Have students:

- Assess their heart rate either by taking their pulse and counting how many beats occur per 10 seconds or by taking the "talk test" to assess how their ability to talk is compromised by the physical activity of playing. Record the difference in heart rate both prior to playing and after playing.
- Take notice of their body temperature simply by having them touch their forehead before and after play. Has their temperature changed?
- Assess how they feel before play and after by asking them to describe in one word how they feel. What kinds of adjectives do they use before play? After? What are the differences?

Extension 1: Have students compile their findings on a graph.
Extension 2: Have students create a series of tableaux that depicts their body before play and after play.

# UNITS OF STUDY CONT'D

Grades JK-3 cont'd.

## Activities

### Spinning a Yarn

**Points of Concentration**: to engage participants in an activity where listening and building on information is the focus.

**Uses and Applications**: use ***Spinning a Yarn*** to generate creative ideas for engaging in dramatic play.

Directions:
1. Sit in a circle with your students and begin a round of storytelling with each person contributing one sentence of the story.
2. Start with a sentence that sets the mood and tone of the story and ask students to add sentences that build on what has come before and contains possibilities of events that could follow. Feel free to use characters or situations from the Robert Munsch stories and/or stick figure images of people, places, and actions on pages 16 and 17, to get started.
3. Taking turns, moving clockwise around the circle students add to the story. Encourage students to act on their impulses and to think too long.

Extension 1: Instead of proceeding clockwise in a circle, when one participant has completed their sentence that participant points to someone in the circle who must carry on with the next sentence of the story.

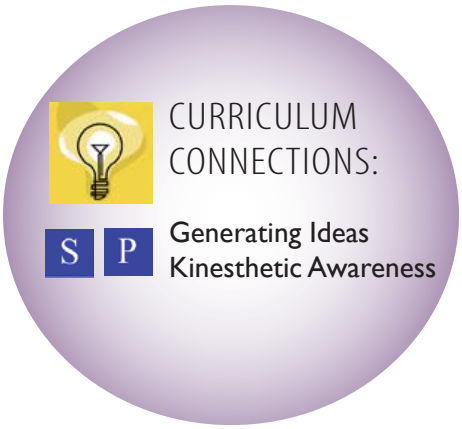
Extension 2: As each storyteller adds to the story, the rest of the class uses ***1-2 Decroux*** (p. 13) to bring the story to life.

Extension 3: Record the students' story in order to develop it further.

***Spinning a Yarn*** employs many of the same rules as *Improvisation*, a theatre technique that actors use to create drama without a script.

### Rules of Improvisation

NO NEGATION! Participants should be encouraged to say "Yes, And..." The best way to move an improvisation forward is to accept what others offer as new information and build on it. Always answer affirmatively and watch magic happen!
Example: Player A: "Look, it's raining outside." Player B: "No it isn't" - the scene has hit a dead end. In this case call: "say yes, and! to add something new to the scene!"
NO QUESTIONS! Asking questions in an improvisation puts the onus on the other actor to drive the scene. Example: Player A: "What did you do today?" [Player B must now produce a list of interesting and (worse!) entertaining activities.] Player B: "Umm…well I got up…" In this case call: "Don't ask a question, offer some information upon which your player can build!"




## UNITS OF STUDY CONT'D

Grades JK-3 Post-Show

### Activities

**1-2 Decroux**

**Point of Concentration:** to isolate and shift the body's centre of balance in order to transform the body into an expression of the interior life of objects, places and ideas.

**Uses & Applications**: use ***1-2 Decroux*** to explore the physical and emotional life of stories & scripts. Casting concerns ease when Directors see that everyone can have a part by using this exercise. Players can be chairs, tables, paintings, Paris, Tanzania, Love, Anger, etc.

Directions:

1. Have players engage in some physically active game, such as Tag, that uses the entire "stage" space. When players are dispersed interestingly, suspend their movement. Ask them to hold the "freeze" energy in their body, do not release but breathe. Ask them to find their "centre of gravity." Notice it.
2. Explain that you will call out objects, places or ideas one at a time and, initially, on a count of three. Players can begin to isolate the object, place or idea in their body on the count of one and complete their transformation by three.
3. Slowly count of one, two, three. During the count, players isolate *the shape and construction of objects, places and ideas in their bodies*. Players shift their centre of gravity and move as their body becomes the object, place or idea. The isolation probably doesn't mean a great deal of movement throughout the space but rather specific, local adjustments that must occur as we put the human into the object, place or idea (and vice versa).
4. As players and their muscles become experienced, facilitators can challenge the players to isolate and transform immediately and on impulse.
5. Holding the new shifting in their bodies call out another object, place or idea. Repeat 1-3.

Calls: Take your time! Stay focused! Isolate, don't force! Become the shape! Are you square, round, a triangle? How does a (x) feel? Let us see the (x)! Breathe! Allow your centre to shift!

Origins: base exercise developed by Joyce & Byrne Piven at The Piven Theatre Workshop (www.piventheatre.org), based on the corporeal mime work of Etienne Decroux (1898-1991).

## UNITS OF STUDY CONT'D

Grades JK-3 cont'd.

### Activities

**Act it Out!**

**Point of Concentration**: students explore the characters from Robert Munsch's stories physically.

**Uses and Applications**: use ***Act it Out!*** to engage students to think creatively about the characters in the play. Encourage them to add attributes to the characters and make them their own.

Begin by reviewing the events of the play *Love You Forever and More Munsch* or by reading the stories, *Mortimer, Murmel, Murmel, Murmel, The Paper Bag Princess, Love You Forever,* and *Zoom* with your class.

**Directions:**

Have students:

- Walk around the room as one of the characters from the stories without speaking.
- Make the sounds their character would make i.e. what does a fire breathing dragon sound like?
- Make eye contact with each other and introduce themselves in their character to one another, i.e. "Hi, I'm Elizabeth." "Hi, I am Mortimer."
- Assemble into groups of the number you call out i.e. call: "groups of four." When students are in their group ask them to freeze and form a tableau without speaking. Call: "unfreeze!" and have students continue to move around and repeat the exercise in different groups of different numbers.

Extension: Writing in role
Have students stay in role and ask them to write a letter to Robert Munsch as their character. The letter should include:

- Three questions for Robert Munsch about the story they are in.
- Some interesting information or insight about the character they are writing as; i.e., a student writing in role as Elizabeth could write: "Dear Mr. Munsch, why do I have to wear this dress? It is not warm enough!"
- An idea for an alternate beginning or ending to the story.
- Send your letters to Robert Munsch or to LKTYP!

# UNITS OF STUDY CONT'D

Grades JK-3 cont'd.

## Activites

**Culminating Activity: Stick Figure Storytelling**

**Point of Concentration:** using images as the source for creative storytelling.

**Uses and Applications**: use ***Stick Figure Storytelling*** as an example of using a primary source to generate creative work. Playing **Stick Figure Charades** as a warm up, employs both the Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence and the Interpersonal intelligence.

**Stick Figure Charades**

On pages 16-17 you will find stick figure images of various people, places, and actions from *Love You Forever and More Munsch*. In order to familiarize students with the images, start a game of charades whereby one student is shown a stick figure image and then has 30 seconds to act it out. The rest of the class must guess the image from what the actor is doing. Create your own symbols for "people", places", and "actions" in the same way that there are symbols for "movies" and "books" in traditional charades.

**Creative Storytelling**

In order to begin generating creative work, have students choose one stick figure image from each of the categories: people, places, and actions (full size 8.5"x10" images are available for downloading on the Learning page at www.lktyp.ca).

Have students:

- Draw a picture that incorporates all three categories.
- Once students have completed the exercise, have students present their picture to the class, asking them to explain how they incorporated the three categories into their picture and how the three categories connect with each other.

Once students have completed their picture, assemble students in groups and have them:

- Create and dramatize a short story that incorporates one stick figure image from each of the categories.
- Incorporate elements of reader's theatre including a narrator and the simple beginning, middle, and end structure of stories,
- Use music or other effects (choral speaking, lights on/off, basic costumes) to heighten the intensity of the scenes.
- Incorporate humour by using the comic devices Robert Munsch employs in his stories such as repetition, and silly situations.
- Present their scenes/short plays to the class.

# UNITS OF STUDY CONT'D

## Stick Figure Illustrations

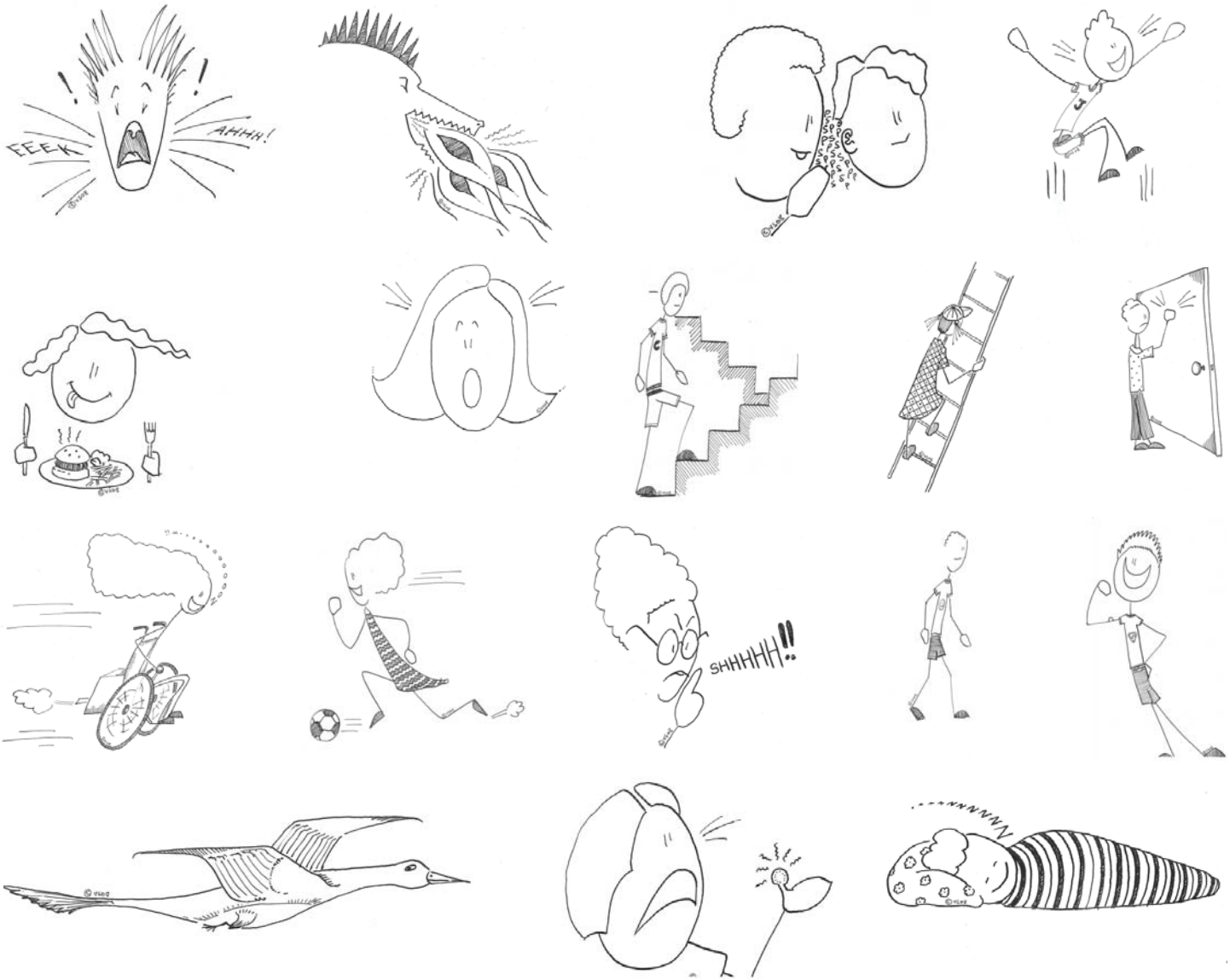
### People

### Places

# UNITS OF STUDY CONT'D

Places Cont'd

Actions




*Illustrations by Vajdon Sohaili*

RUBRIC

Character/Tableau Exercise Participation Rubric

| | **Just Learning** | **Amateur** | **Apprentice** | **Master** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ability to maintain focus and remain on-task. (Inhibitory Control, Working Memory) | Remains in character for short intervals. Often distracts other students from the task. | Remains in character a significant amount of the time. Is prone to becoming distracted by other students. | Remains in character almost all of the time. Occasionally becomes distracted by other students but always returns to the task. | Remains fully committed to their character throughout activity. Encourages other students to stay on task. |
| Ability to demonstrate character physically. (Cognitive Flexibility) | Demonstrates a developing unique physical character trait. | Demonstrates one strong unique physical character trait. | Demonstrates two unique physical character traits. | Demonstrates multiple unique physical character traits. |
| Ability to demonstrate character vocally. | Demonstrates a tentative unique character voice. | Demonstrates a developing unique character voice. | Demonstrates a solid unique character voice. | Demonstrates a strong, unique character voice. |
| Ability to interact with other characters. (Working Memory) | Developing ability to react appropriately to other actors in character. | Reacts appropriately to other actors in character some of the time. | Reacts appropriately to other actors in character most of the time. | Always reacts appropriately to other actors in character. |

# RESOURCES

The Association for Childhood Education International: http://www.acei.org/playpaper.htm

Child & Family Canada: http://www.cfc-efc.ca/index.shtml

National Institute for Play: http://nifplay.org/

The Official Robert Munsch Website: http://www.robertmunsch.com/

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Theatrebooks: www.theatrebooks.com

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# NOTES

**Arts Impact: Making a difference in the lives of students**

*LKTYP is proud to have **Great-West Life, London Life** and **Canada Life** as lead sponsors for its Arts Impact program, which provides opportunities for schools in low-income areas of Toronto to participate in quality arts education. Arts Impact's goal is to deepen students' understanding of theatre, allowing them to be inspired by the material presented on stage and to think in ways that challenge their own perceptions.*

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**Connections: Addressing the pattern of poverty**

*There is empirical evidence that children who live in poverty are at greater risk of dropping out of school. Studies have also proven that exposure to arts improves scholastic ability and attendance. Thanks to the generosity of **CIBC World Markets Children's Miracle Foundation,** LKTYP can offer special subsidized tickets to qualifying schools.*

CIBC World Markets Children's Foundation

LORRAINE KIMSA THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (formerly Young Peoples Theatre) is the largest Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) company in Canada and a significant institution in the Canadian professional theatre community. Over our 42-year history we have produced many of the most important works that now form the canon of plays for young audiences in this country. Learning is at the centre of everything we do and LKTYP is renowned as the showplace for presenting important TYA work developed elsewhere. In addition to being a producer and presenter of theatre, LKTYP has also been home to a year-round Drama School for youth since 1969.

At the centre of LKTYP's artistic policy is a desire to have a positive and lasting impact on the emotional, social, and intellectual development of young people in order for them to grow into the unique and wonderful people they were born to be. At LKTYP we also believe that the more challenging, the more hostile, the more 'isolated within-the-crowd' our world becomes, the more we need art to help us interpret the universe, connect with each other, and imagine a better future. If adults need this, kids need it more.

The aesthetic vision for LKTYP is one where three streams of performance are given importance. Firstly, the classics of children's literature from around the world offer children membership in an ancient childhood, renewing in them the images and inspirations of our own lives as children. Secondly, contemporary works and vigorous new Canadian play development ensure continuing relevance to the real lives of kids. Finally, the Drama School creates theatre for youth by youth.

Photo: Ted Simonett

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